

PREMI KISAN
An Agricultural Drama

By
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AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT
H.E.H. the Nizam's Government

PREMI KISAN

(An Agricultural Drama)

by

MD. HYDER HASAN *Nashtar.*

INTRODUCTION

Various methods are followed by the Agricultural Departments in India for introduction of improvements in the agriculture of the country. Experience has shown that the most effective of them is practical demonstration in the village, on the cultivator's own land, under his own conditions. As every operation from the beginning to the end is carried out before his eyes, the successful result of the demonstration does not fail to impress him. This is the method on which the Agricultural Department of the Hyderabad State mainly depends for introduction of agricultural improvements in the State. Other methods of propaganda are also continued, at the same time, as they are also useful in their own way.

2. These other methods have some limitations, from the point of view of the mentality and illiteracy of the villager. For instance, free distribution of literature or lectures. Most of the cultivators are illiterate. They cannot read the literature themselves. They have to get it read out to them by some one else, and very few are interested enough in improvements to take the trouble. The villager feels the lectures as dry talks and too trying for his patience. Or, Magic Lantern pictures, which are usually accompanied with oral explanations: This does interest the villager in the beginning, but after some time his mind starts wandering about for a change. Of all such methods, Cinema picture is perhaps the thing which interests the villager the most. But, the speed of the moving picture is rather puzzling to him. His untrained mind cannot always follow it intelligently. In course of time, as education spreads, he will become intelligent enough to fully appreciate all such things, though at present they are more or less foreign to him.

3. Drama (called *Natak* in Hindi) has always had a prominent place in the Indian literature. Drama acting has been a common thing in towns and villages, practically throughout India. This acting the villagers have been doing themselves. As instances may be mentioned Ram Lila, Krishan Lila. Kans Lila, Indar Sabha. The Agricultural Department of the Hyderabad State made an attempt to see how far this method could be useful for its propaganda purposes. The first attempt was made at the Rural Development Centre, Pattancheru. Small stories were composed on various subjects of rural development, including agriculture, and enacted in some villages round about Pattancheru. They were witnessed by large crowds with great interest. Encouraged by the results of the first attempt, the department undertook to show a drama in the Hyderabad Horticultural and Poultry Show. This story "*Premi Kisan*" was composed by Mr. Hyder Hasan, '*Nashtar*,' for the occasion, and was staged on the 24th January 1935. It was a successful display, and was much appreciated by the public.

4. The object of this drama is to introduce the public with the activities of the Agricultural Department in general, and to induce the farmers and others to adopt improved methods of agriculture, gardening, poultry keeping, etc., and to show to the educated agriculturist (e.g., *Agricultural Graduates*) that they can benefit by following the profession which they have learnt more than by wasting time in search of Government service. Raj, the hero, is an agricultural graduate. He fails to obtain government employment. His father is angry on spending so much of his money on education and on condemning the old methods of agriculture and praising the modern ones. The father, therefore, turns him out of his house. Raj is in love with the daughter of his uncle. The uncle refuses to give his daughter in marriage to him, but agrees to reconsider the proposition if Raj proves himself a successful farmer. Raj starts farming with the advice of the officers of the Agricultural Department and makes a success of it. His father and uncle both are pleased, and he is married to his sweetheart.

5. The story is interesting and instructive, and it could be enacted efficiently enough to serve the purpose in view. The original is in Urdu, which has been translated into English. It is being published with the hope that it will be of some use to other workers in the field of improvement of the Indian village life.

NIZAMUDDIN HYDER,

Director of Agriculture,

H.E.H. the Nizam's Government.

Dramatis Personae.

1. KISHTAIYYA .. A farmer. .
2. SUBBA Kishtaiyya's brother-in-law—a
farmer.
3. RAJ Kishtaiyya's son—an agricultural
graduate.
4. RATNAIYYA .. An agricultural graduate—candi-
date for a post in Agricultural
Department.
5. SUPERINTENDENT .. Superintendent of the Office of the
Director of Agriculture.
6. SECRETARY .. Secretary, *Hyderabad Farming
Association.*
7. MANAGER .. Manager of the Office of Hyderabad
Farming Association.
8. DURGA An advanced farmer of the village.
9. KURMAIYYA .. Durga's friend—a *well-to-do land-
owner.*
10. PATEL Village Patel.
11. DEPUTY DIRECTOR .. An Officer of the Department of
Agriculture.
12. RAJ'S MOTHER .. Kishtaiyya's wife.
13. BABI Subba's daughter.
14. PEON . .. Peon of the Farming Association.
15. DAISMUKH .. Village Daismukh.
16. JAGGAIYYA .. }
17. BALAIYYA .. } Kurmaiyya's courtiers. .

PREMI KISAN

ACT I.



SCENE 1.

AGRICULTURAL DIRECTORATE.

[A large gathering of candidates in the foreground of the Agricultural Directorate—Candidates busy talking—RAJ enters—looks at the gathering—stops for a moment—takes out a newspaper from his pocket and turning over the page reads aloud]

RAJ.—

“Wanted—a Fieldman, in the Department of Agriculture. Grade of pay being Rs. 60 to 100. Only those who can produce a Mulki certificate from the Talukdar of Baghat or a District Talukdar may apply. Candidates must necessarily have graduated in agriculture from a recognised institution. Applicants are required to present themselves with their applications, certificates, etc., at the office of the Director of Agriculture on the 20th day of Isfandar at 2-0 p.m.”—(Turning to the gathering of candidates)—So many candidates for one post of Rs. 60 per month, and all B.Ags. I am rather fed up with these candidates. I wonder if they would one day attempt to fill up the vacancy even between the earth and the skies.—(Addressing one of the candidates a bit peculiar in appearance)—May I have the honour to know your name, Sir?

RATNAIYYA.—

My name is said to be Mr. Ratnaiyya, L.Ag. I am the first and the only graduate in my whole dynasty.

RAJ.—

So very glad to hear it. I suppose it is a house that you live in?

RATNAIYYA.—

Beg your pardon, Sir.

RAJ.—

I mean to ask you if you live in a house.

RATNAIYYA.—

I live in a village where there had been no graduate before myself.

RAJ.—

Where, may I know?

RATNAIYYA.—

In the village of Karamkallapalli, Taluka Gulabnagar, Post office Aseelabad, Division Sapota, District Croton in the Province of Incubator.

RAJ.—

I see—coming from Incubator then? Thank God, you have come out.

ANOTHER.—

But from general appearance, my dear friend, you seem to be one of the first attempts of a fresh apprentice in a sculptor's studio.

ANOTHER.—

In every country some place or the other is specially famous for illustrious 'dupes.' I think, you belong to some such place. Isn't it so?

RAJ.—

What sort of people are you? You dare insult a gentleman like this. In fact, he comes from a country where there is no particular place specified for dupes.

ANOTHER.—

That is, you mean there dwell none but dupes all over there!

RATNAIYYA.—

No more of that, please. You are all very silly.

A CANDIDATE.—

What?—Silly?—(*Calling all others*) Well Sirs, come, come, look at Mr. Silly here.

ALL CANDIDATES.—

Which Mr. Silly, Oh! where is the thing?

FIRST CANDIDATE.—

(*Pointing towards Mr. Ratnaiyya*) Here we have got him—just at our disposal—Mr. Silly, let me introduce you to—

(*Ratnaiyya, chafed and angry—rushes towards the candidate but all others block the way*)

FIRST CANDIDATE.—

Why? His name, he says, is Mr. Silly.

SECOND CANDIDATE.—

Is really your name Mr. Silly, Sir?

RATNAIYYA.—

No, Sir.

THIRD CANDIDATE.—

Then, what is your name Sir?

FIRST CANDIDATE.—

'Mr. Silly' he told me himself.

(Ratnaiyya is again enraged)

FOURTH CANDIDATE.—

But he fully confirms Darwin.

THIRD CANDIDATE.—

No, please. What is all this? Don't trouble him. Really, how silly you are! How unjust it is to cut jokes with such a simple man!

FOURTH CANDIDATE.—

Yes, as simple as a simpleton.

THIRD CANDIDATE.—

Oh, don't trouble him! Leave him off.

SECOND CANDIDATE.—

Leave him? Never—How can we leave such a man? We don't get them so often. It is mere luck that we found him.

FOURTH CANDIDATE.—

But Darwin's theory is proved Q.E.D.

SECOND CANDIDATE.—

Indeed. There is no doubt, no difference at all, a mere—

• FIRST CANDIDATE.—

I fully remember having seen him in Tarzan the other day. A good brute, indeed! •

RATNAIYYA.—

(Angrily) Hold your tongue!

• SECOND CANDIDATE.—

Hallo! It speaks. It speaks.

RATNAIYYA.—

(Angrily) It is a pity that graduates behave like this.

RAJ.—

Because, graduates do not very often come across creatures like you.

[All burst into wild laughter—Meanwhile the Superintendent comes out from the front door, with a sheet of paper in hand and addresses the candidates.]

SUPERINTENDENT.—

Saheb has seen all the applications. Five of you have been selected. *(Calls out the names of the five selected candidates)*—Mr. Bakhshi, B.Sc., (Oxen.), Mr. Acharya, B.Ag., Diploma (England), Mr. Shankar, M.Sc., (N.Y.), Mr. Suleman, B.Ag., B.Sc., M.A. (Edin.), Dr. Sher Khan, M.Sc., Ph.D. (London). These should wait for the interview and the rest may depart.

RAJ.—

Not my name! Hard luck. Not even a degree of B.Ag. could help to procure a job of sixty per month.

[All the disappointed candidates prepare to depart but Mr. Ratnaiyya approaches the Superintendent from amidst the gathering.]

RATNAIYYA.—

I think you have overlooked one name. You did not call Mr. Ratnaiyya—I am a L.Ag. from Nagpur. I am a Mulki, and so to say, my education is also Mulki. I am sure that Saheb has not rejected me. Would you mind going through the list once more?

SUPERINTENDENT.—

I am sorry to say that Saheb did not mention your name, at least in the list. So you better depart for the time being. If you are selected at all, you will be duly informed later. But in my opinion you better seek a place in Public Gardens. I am sure you will get a post there, and free Government quarters also.

RATNAIYYA.—

Is it so? Have they got any vacancy over there?

SUPERINTENDENT.—

Indeed, they are constantly in search for such as may interest the public. They have recently opened a special department in a corner of the Garden.

RATNAIYYA.—

Oh! Thanks awfully for the information. Very glad to hear it—I will just go and approach the Superintendent there.

SUPERINTENDENT.—

Do go, I say.

RATNAIYYA.—

(While departing) Will you be, Sir, kind enough to give me a recommendatory or at least an introductory letter to the gentleman there

SUPERINTENDENT.—

Oh! You need not any. Your appearance is, I mean, your qualifications are enough to get you a good place there.

SCENE 2.

A COUNTRY COTTAGE.

[In front of a country cottage, Kishtaiyya—Raj's father—is sitting with a hand-made, rough pipe in hand. He calls out Raj's mother to light his pipe. She comes out with a burning timber in pincers and lights Kishtaiyya's pipe and sits down beside him.]

MOTHER.—

What do you think, will my Raj get a job to-day?

KISHTAIYYA.—

I wish he may not.

MOTHER.—

Oh, pray don't utter such ill omen! God has given us the only child and you dare curse him so!

KISHTAIYYA.—

Yes! The only child! He spent away all that I had earned through such a hard labour—my life's earnings! Really how dutiful a son he is!

MOTHER.—

Well, whatever is spent on educating a son is never lost. He will surely repay it some day or the other.

KISHTAIYYA.—

(Ironically) He will repay indeed! Education will make your son a Lat-saheb. During these four years of education I have exhausted all I had, and all in vain; without any hope of return. Education—Education—his education has absorbed every penny of the little savings I had in command, and now he says that he is a graduate—suited, booted, assumes the bearing of a 'Saheb Bahadur.' Born in the family of an earth scraper, aspires for a post in Government Service. It is the block-headed upstarts of this kind who begin to look down the whole humanity as soon as they are given a high post.

MOTHER.—

But that poor boy—where is he to get a high post.

KISHTAIYYA.—

I know it fully well. Who is going to offer him one? But he will attain wisdom only when he has suffered sufficiently and has failed for as many years as he has spent in his education—Look, he is coming!

MOTHER.—

(Very much pleased to see RAJ coming) Pray God he may have been successful in getting the job.

(RAJ enters.)

MOTHER.—

My RAJ! got the job?

RAJ.—

(*With a melancholy taunt*) Government job and for me. Well, mother, a job is for those only who have enough wealth, sufficient influence and high foreign qualifications with them.

KISHTAIYYA.—

Knowing all that why did you venture to apply for it? This was why I little liked to educate you. Now go and dig out your late uncle from the grave and ask him for the Government post as he was the man who insisted upon your higher education.

MOTHER.—

Why abuse the dead? The poor uncle never wished a bad luck for the boy. Whatever he said was for his betterment (to RAJ). Is there no hope now?

RAJ.—

No mother! What am I when compared to those who obtained education in Europe.

MOTHER.—

But why do not the people who obtain education in Europe seek employment there in Europe only? Why do they come back and stand in the way of our children here?

KISHTAIYYA.—

Indeed! As if your child is unique in the whole world and all others should strew his path with roses. Well, there are thousands and millions like him, mad in pursuit after a Government post. It is not a joke, mind you.

MOTHER.—

My child, what will you do now?

RAJ.—

Can't say mother. I spent a lot of father's money. I am sorry for that. I had expected a suitable appointment in Government department, in return—but couldn't get any. How long am I to tax father's pocket? Well, I shall relieve him of his burden as much as possible. I shall hereafter till and look after all his lands.

KISHTAIYYA.—

Have come to your senses now. But too late. Why did you not think of it earlier? This was what I had most sincerely told you long ago. But then all my advice fell on deaf ears.

MOTHER.—

Now, what is done is done. Don't press him more. You had ill-treated him when he first returned after four years from his college, and now that he has come home so dejected and mortified, you must show him fatherly kindness.

RAJ.—

No mother! The fault is mine. Whatever you all have spent on my education, is due on me, and I will not be satisfied till I have repaid all.

KISHTAIYYA.—

Oh, yes! I know how dutiful a son you are!

MOTHER.—

Good God. Your every sentence is a taunt, every word a rebuke. Does this become a father? Come, let us go in. (*Kishtaiyya and his wife go inside the house.*)

RAJ.—

(*Soliloquy*) What a misery? What a bad luck! What am I to do now? To get a post is almost impossible and I have promised to repay all that father has spent upon my education. How will I do all that—have no definite source of income and have to lead this miserable life—. But I must take courage and be hopeful. God exists. He shall help me. Let not a Government post be my only aim. God has promised to feed us, not that He would feed through Government service only.

[*BABI is seen carrying a water pot on her head and a rope in hand to fetch water from the well beyond. The coil of rope falls on the ground and is dispersed. BABI with a desperate low exclamation brings down the pot on the ground, begins to arrange the rope. RAJ sees BABI but after four years of change recognises her with difficulty.*]

—————"Who is that girl? Is she BABI, my BABI, what a happy change in these four years! May God protect her against every bad influence."

[*The rope is arranged, but is again decoiled. BABI thinking it tiresome to rearrange it, is enraged. Meanwhile RAJ throws a stone and breaks the water-jar. BABI turns in rage towards RAJ—with rope in hand; she takes him badly to task without knowing who he really is.*]

BABI.—

Were you blind not to see the water-pot there?

RAJ.—

I saw it. I was never blind.

BABI.—

Why did you throw the stone?

RAJ.—

With a definite intention to break the water-pot.

BABI.—

You fool! I shall give you a good thrashing with this
(*showing the rope in her hand*)——

RAJ.—

And as if I have no hands.

BABI.—

All right! I will soon let you know (*calls out someone by name Lalatwa or Malaiyya*).

[*RAJ repeats her shouts mockingly.*]

BABI.—

You scoundrel, ruffian—wait, I shall give you enough for it (*turns back to get away*).

RAJ.—

Is that all? I had expected some more curses. Go on, go on and few more.

[*BABI stops. Looks back. After a moment she recognises in the stranger her old playmate, RAJ—Kishtaiyya's son.*]

BABI.—

RAJ are you? Is that your name?

RAJ.—

Yes—I am RAJ—the same RAJ.

BABI.—

Are you really RAJ or do my eyes deceive me?

RAJ.—

No, they can't deceive. They are so innocent. I am the same RAJ you knew too well.

BABI.—

When did you turn up? You are almost changed. You have grown up a man now—You have moustaches. RAJ—I remember you a small lad.

RAJ.—

Yes BABI—I also remember you when you were only a little thing—you are that little thing no more.

BABI.—

You have come of late, I suppose—and you didn't call on us?

RAJ.—

I reached home the day before yesterday only and left for the city yesterday morning to seek some employment there. That is why I couldn't come to see you, though a visit to you would have been to me the greatest pleasure.

BABI.—

Am I so fortunate? But, however, did you get an employment? Some Government post I presume?

RAJ.—

A Government post is not available so easily nowadays. It is a hard task.

BABI.—

But don't bind yourself to Government service so soon. See, you have returned home after four years and if you will get a job, you will surely repair to your headquarters soon—to some far off place. Is it not? How unkind you are?

RAJ.—

No, I will not try for a Government service now.

BABI.—

Then what else do you intend to do?

• RAJ.—

Should I tell you then? Well I will till the soil all day long and spend the nights in repeating a sweet and sacred name, that of a Goddess.

BABI.—

(*Laughing innocently*) What? May I know which Goddess you worship so much?

RAJ.—

She is called BABI.

[*A loud voice is heard—somebody calling Babi from a distance.*]

BABI.—

Oh! My mother is calling me.

RAJ.—

Wait a bit, I shall accompany you to her.

[*BABI hastens towards her mother, closely followed by RAJ.*]

SCENE 3.

[BENEATH AN OLD SHADY TREE.]

[RAJ'S mother brings mid-day meal for Kishtaiyya on the fields. Kishtaiyya, tired and exhausted with the day's hard labour taking rest beneath an old shady tree. He begins to devour the meal in a way peculiar to his class.]

KISHTAIYYA.—

What a hard task it is to plough alone—and the ploughing season is flying away. And, how hard is the bread to-day—it is rather overbaked. Anyhow, have to eat it. This Cactus is another source of trouble. No sooner do I clear out one place, than it shoots up at another. It destroys whole crops. What a curse it is!

WIFE.—

It is a curse really. But RAJ was telling me the other day that someone has discovered a certain insect that eats up the Cactus soon down to the root and that anybody can get it from the Government Experimental Farms. I say, why not try it?

KISHTAIYYA.—

Oh, RAJ is not content to mention one thing. Since he has returned from college, he mentions a thousand sorts of ploughs and a million more implements. If I am to follow his advice just imagine the consequence. These officials simply wish the cultivators to lose all they now retain as their capital, and so get poorer and poorer day by day through such bargains. I know all that pretty well. No sensible cultivator can overlook the degradation that has followed the peace and tranquility of our fore-fathers' days.

WIFE.—

But you have to spend nothing for the insect I have suggested just now. Moreover, I hear that all the fields in the vicinity of Hyderabad have been cleared off this damned Cactus by this insect—and that it is a success in the districts as well.

KISHTAIYYA.—

Oh, what a success!—Indeed—Cactus was a good thing for hedging but Government has destroyed that also.

WIFE.—

But for hedging purposes RAJ was telling me that Agricultural Authorities recommend Agava. It provides a hedge and from its leaves fibre can be extracted for making ropes and its trunk can be used in roofing. As for Cactus I am glad that it is cleared off. It was a regular curse to the crops and fields.

KISHTAIYYA.—

But the difficulty is— well, this pickle is nice (*tastes it*)—good one indeed. Yes, the difficulty is that RAJ is so much

influenced by the college atmosphere that he actually hates our customs and all our methods and our simple ploughs, while he always praises foreign stuff (*Praises the chutnee once more, while helping himself with it*).

WIFE.—

Well, you always find fault with him.

KISHTAIYYA.—

Because he is a careless fool.

WIFE.— . .

Every youth of his age remains careless until some sort of responsibility is placed over him, and he is no exception. Make RAJ responsible for something or the other and I assure you he will be all right.

KISHTAIYYA.—

Oh, to make him responsible for a thing or work is to throw it before the dogs. I think it is better to trust the thing to devil than to make RAJ responsible for it. If I leave the fields to him, I am sure there will be no crops at all, and a complete ruin would follow. The Patels and Patwaris will extract the due rent from us, even at the expense of our honour and life. Even the paltry domestic utensils will be auctioned and we would remain only to die of starvation. Am I wrong?

WIFE.—

Oh, you go too far! I do not mean to urge you on to trust the whole farm to him. But I mean—well—get him married as soon as possible. Then he will feel the responsibility that he has to support his wife and children and everything will be all right with him.

KISHTAIYYA.—

To get him married—and under these circumstances—Good God! Well, to earn a scanty bread for the present beings is in itself a hard task, you know. How dare I take the responsibility of others, that is his wife, etc.

WIFE.—

No, you wouldn't have to be responsible for her. Just think of yourself when you were of this age. Were you not utterly unemployed? Till you were unmarried—you were reckless and quite unscrupulous. Were you then so serious as now? RAJ on the other hand has received sufficient education at least. He is promising—He has no moral defects, immoral habits, while do you not remember spending hours and days together in Sendhi-Buns. And what happened after you were married? Could you remain the same careless, negligent and irresponsible loiterer? Did you not take to the plough so very seriously and begin to remain on the farm from morn till night? Yes—answer me.

KISHTAIYYA.—

(Scratching his head) Well, may be. But who will consent to marry his daughter to RAJ.

WIFE.—

Who will not? He is not a thief or a loafer. BABI—I think, would be the best match. After all she is your sister's daughter—a near kin, and moreover she knows farming too.

KISHTAIYYA.—

Yes—Subba is my brother-in-law and a near kin too. But he will hardly agree to BABI'S marriage with RAJ. RAJ is poor and unemployed and Subba once told me that he will get his daughter married to a wealthy man.

WIFE.—

Why not try? Just see if he consents to it now. I will discuss it with BABI'S mother—. Look Subba is going thither—homewards perhaps. Call him and tell him. Let us see what he has to say.

KISHTAIYYA.—

No. Not now. I'll tell him when at home.

WIFE.—

I wish you had told him now only. Call him.

KISHTAIYYA.—

(Calling aloud) Subba—would you mind coming over here, Subba.

WIFE.—

May God grant that he agrees to the proposal!

[Kishtaiyya having finished his meal, drinks some water, uses the remaining to wash his hands and mouth—Removes the empty pots towards his wife, and stands up—Genily rubbing his stomach—as if over-fed and waits for Subba's approach.]

KISHTAIYYA.—

(To Subba) I hope ploughing is over in your fields, Subba.

SUBBA.—

Yes, only two plots are to be done now. But it is high noon and the sun is straight above. I hope I'll finish it in the afternoon. Yet I am much worried about my standing crops. There has appeared some infection and that is destroying the whole thing.

WIFE.—

RAJWA was telling me the other day that they at the Government Agricultural Farm have found out some remedy for such infection. If a few infected plants be sent there for diagnosis, they would give some medicated liquid, which if sprinkled over the fields would destroy the germs.

SUBBA.—

Is it so? That's very good and the Government should be thanked for it. But where to find RAJWA.

KISHTAIYYA.—

He has gone to take his meal (*with a deep sigh*). But it is very disgusting to think how his expensive education has made me almost a bankrupt. I had to spend away on his education the last pie I had so laboriously earned, and now he only boasts that he is a B.Ag. Just think, of what use all this is to us—poor tillers of the soil—.

SUBBA.—

(*to RAJ'S mother*) And was he telling you that only a few of the infected plants need be sent to the Government Farm?

WIFE.—

Yes, only a few, so that the officers-in-charge might make out what sort of germs exist there, and accordingly prescribe a suitable medicine. The officer, he was telling me—is deputed expressly for this purpose so that every one might easily avail of his help.

KISHTAIYYA.—

Well, he tells us a lot. I will only believe him when he himself does something successfully and is able to earn a livelihood.

WIFE.—

I tell you, do believe me. Get him married and see. I am sure the responsibility will automatically make him work hard and earn something.

KISHTAIYYA.—

But who will give his daughter to him, with the only hope that being a B.Ag., he might be prosperous and well-to-do in future. It is a mere risk.

WIFE.—

But it is a fact and none can deny, that RAJ, with such high qualifications will soon rise to prosperity. My ambition is to get RAJ married with BABI.

SUBBA.—

(*To himself*) With BABI! RAJ to marry BABI!.... BABI'S marriage with RAJWA! RAJ to be BABI'S husband! BABI to be RAJWA'S wife.....

WIFE.—

Your daughter will remain under your own eyes—she will be next door to you. She will feel quite at home with us. We are all one and the same—nearest kins—the same blood and bones. I think this would be the most appropriate and happy suit.

[RAJ enters.....]

RAJ.—

Ram, Ram. Mama!

SUBBA.—

(Consumed in his thoughts). If BABI be married to , well her mother once told me to engage her with Durga, the son of Venkat, the wealthy landlord. But I did not consent to it.

KISHTAIYYA.—

Durga is not a bad boy.

SUBBA.—

But.....the thing is....well, we know each other.... This is a question of the whole life of the two. Well, to tell the truth is after all the best thing.....

KISHTAIYYA.—

Well, I don't mean to compel you. If you like to get BABI married to RAJ it is good—if not, I can have no grievance. You are quite right in keeping the future in view—. It is wise of you.

SUBBA.—

That is why I was telling you all that. The present situation—RAJ'S unemployment—is quite evident and as you admit he does not do any work.....

WIFE.—

But I give you my word that even if I starve I would not let your daughter suffer a bit or undergo the slightest pain.

SUBBA.—

Well, I may consent to the proposal, but on one condition.....

KISHTAIYYA.—

(Looking at his wife in anxiety) But wherefrom shall I get money to fulfil the condition?

SUBBA.—

That I don't know. You will have to comply with it anyhow if at all you aspire for the match.

KISHTAIYYA.—

It is a great problem.

SUBBA.—

You will have to solve it. Wherever and in whatever way you get the solution. But it is RAJ'S duty—He must do it if he cares to marry BABI—and he can do it.

WIFE.—

Well, if it is a question of a hundred rupees or so, I can mortgage whatever ornaments I have and will lay down the sum at your disposal. But if more be needed, I can't help. It is beyond my power.

SUBBA.—

What? do you really think I want money. No, No. At least I don't demand it for myself.

WIFE.— • •

Be it for BABI.

SUBBA.—

Oh! No. You simply mistook me, and I was amused to see you misunderstand like that. You could not make out what my condition could possibly be. I never intend to demand money,—and in exchange for a daughter! Horrible! It is no better than a bargain or a betting. Those who do such things, do not but put their daughter on auction or for sale. I am not one of them. To see you prosperous and my daughter happy is my only wish and consideration. Now let me tell you what I really mean. The condition that I lay down is that RAJ by cultivating the lands successfully should prove to me, that within three or four years he can develop his farming to the extent that he with all his family will get a satisfactory livelihood through it. If this one condition be fulfilled I promise to consent to the offer, otherwise, BABI'S engagement and marriage with Durga, is sure and certain.

WIFE.—

My God—only this one condition and so much botheration about it. What is there in it? It is so simple.

KISHTAIYYA.—

Is it so simple? It is not an easy one. Mind that to fulfil it is no less difficult than raising crops of barley on one's palm.

SUBBA.—

May be. But I think I am not unjust or any bit harsh. Who will not look to the future of his children? I have expressed myself. Now it is your turn to think over what I have said.

RAJ'S MOTHER.—

RAJ, this is the time for you. All depends upon you now—*i.e.*, to make your life a success or a failure. Parents do not live to support the children for ever. Select one of the alternatives of your life—success or failure—. You have to do for yourself. You have already heard what Subba said.

RAJ.—

Mother—Rest assured, I will show Mamma, what he is so very desirous to see.

KISHTAIYYA.—

Of course. As if your father has an amassed wealth and has placed all at your entire disposal, which you will sow and shall reap a thousand fold.

RAJ.—

But the lands in your possession are of none but my father's. Is it not, father! and now my dear father, I will make a fortune out of it. I am going to the Government Farm, shall consult the authorities there and will follow their advice regarding the lands.

KISHTAIYYA.—

I see! You will consult the authorities on the Government Farm! And they would load you with gold of your own weight immediately. Be in your senses! Do you wish me, in this old age to labour in a jail? I am afraid the authorities will at once increase the rent. They may trouble us in a thousand ways. God forbid! Listen! Whether you are married to BABI or not, little do I care. But I will not go to consult any officer, nor will I allow you to do so at the expense of my lands. Be careful.

• RAJ.—

Your fear is meaningless, father. Government is not foolish to have established such a grand Department of Agriculture, and all for naught.

KISHTAIYYA.—

The Government is never foolish. I wish it had been. But it is wise enough to exact its demands out of anything we can afford to have.

RAJ.—

No, father. That's not it.

KISHTAIYYA.—

Shut up! You fool! You want to make a fool of me. Remember, this hoary head has had much more experience than you can even imagine.

RAJ.—

But, father, I have spent four years in college and not in vain I think. I also know something.

KISHTAIYYA.—

Yes, what else am I to expect of you? I am your father only to hear you pronouncing me a fool. Get away from me, I disown you.

WIFE.—

Lose not your temper. Think what you say.

KISHTAIYYA.—

Yes, I have said what I had to say. I will smash his bones if he entered my house.

RAJ.—

You mistook me, father. I did not say anything but that I had not spent four years of college in vain.

KISHTAIYYA.—

No more of that. A young urchin and he thinks that we elders are all mere blockheads.

WIFE.—

But he did not tell anything bad that you are so out of tune.

KISHTAIYYA.—

It is this your blind motherly affection that has ruined him—made him so bold and impertinent. You will not feel it till he has actually kicked you off one day.

WIFE.—

If he is so intolerable, why not put an end to his life?

• KISHTAIYYA.—

Shut up. No more of that nonsense.

WIFE.—

But you will go on abusing me as long as you like and I am a slave-girl as if to quietly bear every nonsense that you utter.

KISHTAIYYA.—

I have told you once to hold your tongue. Do not enrage me anymore.

WIFE.—

And I have told you not to go too far. Mind. For a word, you will have to hear a hundred from me. You are as if tired of his very existence. Always the same taunts, the same slang speech. I know you hate him, and abuse him in whatever a way you want and whenever you like. Always quarrelling with him. You have degraded the house to a brawling tavern, a slum. If he is to kick me, will it be all? What about yourself? He has the same blood in his veins and a grown up man now. If he is also out of temper one day—what will happen? You will have to face the consequence of these everyday disputes and repent. He is my son, my affectionate child—I love him so—never do I hate him. Whom will he kick then—? Kick me! Never! It is you, I am afraid, who will be kicked off one day or the other.

SUBBA.—

You have gone too far. No more of that. Keep quiet, I say.

RAJ'S MOTHER.—

You also press me—why not stop your brother-in-law. Oh, you both have determined as if to chastise me and scold my child.

KISHTAIYYA.—

Keep quiet you brawling liar—or I will beat you.

WIFE.—

Sour be the hands that beat me, and sceptic the mouth that utters to do so.

[*Enters Patel*]

PATEL.—

What is all this I say?

RAJ'S MOTHER.—

(*Weeping*) See—they have called me bad names and are cursing my child.....

KISHTAIYYA.—

I have told you, if RAJWA entered my house any more, I will break his legs and if you, old hag, do not like to break from him, you also may leave my house. I don't care.

PATEL.—

Do not be so out of temper Kishtaiyya. Just listen to me—well—RAJWA good or bad, is your son after all. Do not be desperate. Do what is worthy of a father, and wholesome to your interest as well as to his. If he approaches the Talukdar Saheb, the Tehsildar Saheb, and the Jagirdar Saheb, I am afraid, as a consequence, you will have to give way in the long run. So I am of opinion that better give him one or two plots of land, a plough and a pair of bullocks—do not help him but with meals—and let him do the rest.

MOTHER.—

Yes, this is quite right. Give him 20 acres of land.

SUBBA.—

Twenty acres.....!

KISHTAIYYA.—

And are we to starve then.

MOTHER.—

Why starve? From the crops thus grown, allow him only as much as he actually needs and you may have the rest. Not a bad bargain.

SUBBA.—

Yes, Yes. This is all right. This can easily be done.

PATEL.—

No. No. Of what use will it be all to him then. It is better if you rent out the land to him so that he may improve as well.

KISHTAIYYA.—

(*After a pause*) All right. As a Patel, you must be obeyed. I agree to your proposal. But twenty acres! It is too much, patel! I can't spare so much—I may lease out not more than fifteen acres. This he may use but on full rent—a plough and a pair of cattle he will get from me. (*To RAJ*) You may take the plots under the Tank and get away from me. Do not show me your ugly face any more.

[*RAJ retires aside weeping*]

ACT II.SCENE 1.

NEAR THE TANK.

[Chafed and mortified RAJ is sitting beside the tank and is weeping—BABI steals in near him and from behind covers his eyes with her hands—she feels that his eyes are moist with tears.]

BABI.—

Why! You are weeping, RAJ?

[RAJ tries to assume a smiling face and looks at BABI.]

—What has happened RAJ? Tell me why are you weeping. What is wrong with you?

RAJ.—

Everything is wrong with me.

BABI.—

May I know a little.

RAJ.—

I have been expelled from home. I am homeless now.

BABI.—

(Feels sorry first, then tries to console RAJ) Why worry so much. I see, with so many other things in college you have well learned to weep as well. I thought women were well-versed in this art, but you have excelled them all. See how large the tears are, as large as tomatoes.

RAJ.—

No. BABI. I do not worry for the expulsion. But.....

BABI.—

But..... But what?

RAJ.—

My father's rage together with maternal uncle's being angry with me, will, I am afraid, result in our separation for ever, BABI.

BABI.—

(Feeling herself dejected) Don't talk like that, RAJ. *(After a while)* I will go mad.

[Tears come out of her eyes—RAJ is affected the more—For a time both weep, then RAJ tries to console her.]

RAJ.—

Your tears make me weep the more. Once you were so blithe and spirited that you made the weeping ones laugh. But how is it, that you have a sad countenance yourself. Be smiling BABI—Let me see you smiling—Won't you.

BABI.—

None can make me smile and merry now.

RAJ.—

No. You will have to smile and be jolly. No? Will you not? All right I shall have to make you smile now. I have the key. If you don't smile, I wish you may then weep for me.

BABI.—

(Sneers a forced laugh) I wish others to mourn for me ere I happen to weep for you.

RAJ.—

Again the same nonsense—Do you wish me to leave the place? All right—(stands up to go away—BABI hastens to catch-hold of his shirt).

BABI.—

Are you really going away RAJ.

RAJ.—

Did you ever hear anybody going away otherwise. Listen BABI. If you are always so obstinate it will be hard for us to live together happily. We will go on quarrelling as father and mother do.

BABI.—

(Smiling shyly) How naughty you are.

RAJ.—

Naughty or not.....Listen to me. Either I won't marry you.....

BABI.—

How shameless you are RAJ—Don't you feel a bit shy to mention of your marriage question. If you repeat it I will really stop speaking to you.

RAJ.—

As if up to now you were unreal in speaking to me. Well you can stop speaking to me when I happen to mention my marriage but listen, I have already determined not to speak to you till Pandatji, with all that ceremony, has put your hand in mine.

BABI.—

Do not build castles in the air. A farmer's son should not dream of queen's palaces.

RAJ.—

Then perhaps queens should dream of farmers' cottages. I liked to keep you in palaces but how can I help it when you wish to dwell in cottages only.

BABI.—

Leave me alone—I don't want to speak to you any more.

RAJ.—

Don't speak to me. I have no desire to speak to you. I will speak to myself.

"Now that I have been expelled from home—that I am given fifteen acres of land. I have a maternal uncle. He has a daughter. He wants me first to work hard in the fields and so to learn how to earn—and thus to show him that I am advanced in Agriculture and can improve much—in the field. When the crops are good and yield is plenty he will offer me his daughter in marriage. How ugly that daughter is and how fair—What a match? The desire of my heart of hearts....."

BABI.—

(With a suppressed smile) But Raj how will you do all that in a year or so?

RAJ.—

Don't talk to me. I didn't address you

BABI.—

Don't be silly RAJ. Just tell me how do you intend to bring your plan to completion so soon. Where will you get money from? How will you prepare, plough, till and scw the soil all at once? Why not seek help from the Government's Department of Agriculture?

RAJ.—

I know all that—don't try to teach me—You are no more than a mere girl in 'teens' yet.

BABI.—

All this is to be done in such a short time—so soon—Raj better approach the authorities soon. Go to the Farm yourself.

RAJ.—

Yes, I intend to go there. That is the only course left. The Farm is the only place wherefrom I expect to get some support.

BABI.—

Then why make delay RAJ—Never postpone business.

RAJ.—

Yes, BABI. I am going there just now. Pray to God for my success BABI!

BABI.—

Every inch of my being prays God for you RAJ. *May God bless you with success.*

RAJ.—

Not this only. But also pray for our marriage as well.

[*BABI is ashamed and drops down her head. RAJ hastens towards the FARM.*]

SCENE 2.]

[IN THE FIELD.]

[RAJ on his way to the Government Farm, meets Durga—an old friend and playmate of his, who is now standing beside a field. They meet after four years.]

DURGA.—

Hallo! RAJJOO.

RAJ.—

Hallo! Durga.

DURGA.—

I say when did you turn up. I hope you have finished your education. Got through the examination I hope?

RAJ.—

Yes Durga, I have taken the degree. But in spite of having spent or rather wasted thousands of rupees on education, failed to get a job of even sixty monthly in the Agricultural Department.

DURGA.—

And what else had you expected? You are not the only graduate.

RAJ.—

Put aside this topic please. It is so very painful to me. Some other news? How fares it with you now?

DURGA.—

Myself you mean. I have maintained what mine as well as your father had been doing—i.e., tilling the soil.

RAJ.—

As for my father, he had been always expelling me from the house. (*Glancing towards the field—*) and what is that label there.

DURGA.—

It is as if the tail of the field—affixed by the authorities of the Department of Agriculture.

RAJ.—

I see, you have after all been entrapped by the officials.

DURGA.—

No. Not so, but on the contrary I have caught hold of them. The field yonder is wholly prepared by the officers of the Department.

RAJ.—

How is that?

DURGA.—

Oh, I will have to tell you the whole tale, then. Well, a year after you joined the college, there was held a demonstration at the Himayatsagar Government Farm

RAJ.—

Demonstration? What sort of demonstration!

DURGA.—

You don't understand what a demonstration is. Are all your attainments in the fields of Agriculture really for naught. By demonstration is meant a show of various agricultural improvements.

RAJ.—

I could not grasp the idea as yet. Demonstration means a show, but what has it to do with agriculture. I am well-versed in agriculture but tell me of these quaint things.

DURGA.—

Anyhow, the demonstration was held at the Main Farm, Himayatsagar. By the order of the Tehsildar Sahab many of our country folk, including father and myself were sent to attend it in a motor lorry.

RAJ.—

That is to say you were also demonstrated there.

DURGA.—

The authorities arranged for the motor-bus, paid the fare and supplied all of us with meals as well.

RAJ.—

Why? Was it a wedding feast the

DURGA.—

No, my dear friend—the department has undertaken the task of giving instructions to the farmers. That is why we all were summoned to attend the Demonstration, and special arrangements were made for every possible convenience and free conveyances.

RAJ.—

But what was to be seen there in particular.

DURGA.—

A lot of valuable instructions concerning Agriculture were given gratis. Novel and very beneficial implements were worked before us and their various uses were described. We were told how to prepare different sorts of manure on modern commercial and economic lines—how to cut fodder and store it in the pits so as to make it more useful. We saw the engine pump, the chain pump, the Rahat pump, this pump and that pump, in short various sorts of pumps. We were told how to use the pumps for irrigation purposes. They taught us the way to save the crops from the devastating assaults of various insects. Also they showed us a very efficient and convenient method of growing plenty of sugarcane on a small area, then how to take out a greater quantity of juice from it and how to make gur out of the juice and finally how to get a better quality and quantity of sugar out of the gur. In short the whole Farm was as if an encyclopædia of Agriculture.

RAJ.—

And all this was shown to you.

DURGA.—

With every possible hospitality. This was the express purpose of the function, otherwise, the lorry was not our father's property. Nor were we guests there simply to enjoy feastings and diversion only.

RAJ.—

Well, Durga it is really quite a new and a very good thing. I spent four years in British India and remained throughout in an entirely agricultural atmosphere, but neither did I see any such thing there nor did I ever hear of it. How could it be introduced here.

DURGA.—

This is our Director of Agriculture's original idea. It is his genuine innovation. Just see how very useful a thing it is.

RAJ.—

Indeed, a masterpiece. But tell me when is the next demonstration to be held. I'll surely attend it.

DURGA.—

It is arranged twice a year RAJ—the next one will be held in near future—6th Isfandar is the date announced. I shall also attend it.

RAJ.—

But your tale of the Demonstration day was left incomplete—you went there and saw the pumps, etc., and what next?

DURGA.—

Oh, the most interesting part is to follow now. Well, no sooner did my father see the huge sheds, big buildings, the massive machines and costly implements there, than he began to pronounce a thousand curses on all that with a fear that the Government would compel us to buy these 'devils' as he put it, and thus would force us to be spendthrift. Meanwhile there appeared the Deputy Director of Agriculture in-charge of the Farm, and my father accosted him with a thousand remarks—for instance—if the poor farmers were made to follow the example of the Government Farms, they would be bound to buy all that material, the costly machine, etc., and erect such expensive buildings and consequently would go down to the deepest pit of poverty. Well, I trembled with fear that father would at once be shown the way out with every disgrace, as a punishment for this impertinence. On the contrary, the Deputy Director, noble as he was, simply smiled and asked us to think if the Government were in any way to be benefitted by the ruin of the farmers?

RAJ.—

But what did he tell of the huge and costly machines.

DURGA.—

Well, whatever he told was a bare fact. He said that these implements, the machines, etc., were there, maintained at the Government's own expense—only for the purpose of experiments. So that agriculture, according to the nature of soil and season be possible on a more successful scale; and that when any discovery be made, for instance—a better, quality of seed is found, it be propagated free among the farmers.

RAJ.—

Good! But did he tell anything about our purchasing the material, the machine, etc.

DURGA.—

Well, he said that every cultivator was not required to buy all those things. They were only required for the sake of experiments and that the experiments were made at the expense of the Government, with a view to find out more profitable things for the farmers. For instance, if a better seed be found out it would be distributed among the farmers gratis. He also remarked that the Government thus prepares a dish for us, but we refuse it and do not care even to taste it.

RAJ.—

This is all quite right and possibly good, Durga. But in spite of all your oratory I could not make out what does this signboard on the field signify.

DURGA.—

I am coming to that. What an impatient fool you are
RAJ. Let me relate the whole thing otherwise you will go on asking me again and again.

RAJ.—

All right, continue and say whatever you like.

DURGA.—

Yes, I was telling you of the Demonstration. After that it happened once that the Deputy Director was going on tour to Rudrur. On his way while passing these fields he stopped here and as he knew our address, sent for us. I and father went to him. With us he inspected the fields and told us that if we wanted better crops and a greater gain, the Government would be glad to help us. He asked for a few plots of land to be left under his entire supervision, to be treated as he desired. He promised to supply the seed, and teach us some modern and more efficient methods of cultivation; and also supervise the lands from time to time. He expected a far better yield than generally was to be had, and said that when the crops were ready, it would be our property. Moreover he placed his offer on our option to accept or refuse his future help.

RAJ.—

Good. But did your father consent to it.

DURGA.—

Yes. He accepted the offer. Then the Deputy Director departed and a few days after sent his men, who sowed some rice—No. 504—it was told—on one side and some quality of sugarcane, called No. 213 on the other side of the field. The board that you see now indicates the same.

RAJ.—

I see. That is excellent. But my father would not have agreed to that. Just see how flourishing is the field, while in that other field, every plant seems as if praying for death. Pray, tell me Durga, if in any way I also can obtain the help from the Agricultural Officers.

DURGA.—

Oh, yes. It is quite simple—only.....

RAJ.—

(Takes out a magazine from Durga's pocket) And what is it *(Reading the title)*? 'Hyderabad Farmer' What is there in it. I see it is issued from Hyderabad only—a quarterly journal of agriculturists—yearly subscription Rs. 3 only. *(Turning over the pages)* Oh! Oh! in English—as well as in Urdu, Oh! in Telugu as well.

DURGA.—

Yes. It is meant to guide the cultivators and the landlords. It contains very valuable instructions concerning agriculture in three languages. The Inspector Saheb enrolled my name as its subscriber, but it is a very useful thing. It is issued by the Farming Association.

RAJ.—

Well Durga—you are really enjoying agriculture. A fortunate man you are! Will you give me the address, I also wish to become a member of the Association.

DURGA.—

Yes, it is a good idea. I will give you the address. As a member you will enjoy it—it is very beneficial. *(Writes the address on a slip of paper and gives it to RAJ.)* This is the address. Go there, you will be welcomed.

RAJ.—

I will go there straight away. Wish me good luck Durga. I am very anxious to better my condition.

DURGA.—

What a novel anxiety. My dear friend every one is trying for the same.

RAJ.—

But Durga, with me the case is more serious. My whole life depends on the betterment of my financial condition. Durga, let me tell you. I love a girl with all my heart and soul. I can only get her if I am a well-to-do man in the near future. This is the condition.....

DURGA.—

I see. Well RAJ, we both are in the same category. I have been asked to fulfil the same condition.

RAJ.—

And who laid the condition?

DURGA.—

‘Subba’ your maternal uncle RAJ—It is two years since he is trying me thus.

RAJ.—

My maternal uncle has laid down this condition? For whom?

DURGA.—

For BABI'S fair hand.

[RAJ is placed much out of tune—the presence of a rival troubles him the more. He takes his leave and retires.]

SCENE 3.]

[OFFICE—SECRETARY, FARMING ASSOCIATION.]

[A large hall, with a curtain in the middle. On one side is the office—where the Secretary Farming Association is sitting at a table; on the other side is a peon seated on a stool—RAJ enters and asks the peon.]

RAJ.—

Whose office is this?

PEON.—

Office of the Secretary—Farming Association.

RAJ.—

Is the Secretary Saheb in?

PEON.—

Yes Sir, he is in.

[RAJ sends his card in through the peon—The Secretary tells the peon to show him in—RAJ enters.]

SECRETARY.—

(Stands up from his chair to receive RAJ. Shakes hands with him—with his card in the other). RAJ saheb take a chair please. Of what service can I be to you.

RAJ.—

(Sitting on the chair beside the table) I wish to know the rules and regulations of your Association.

SECRETARY.—

(With a smile) Rules and Regulations—When you are a member of the Association you will come to know them better.

RAJ.—

I have come expressly for the purpose—that is to become a regular member of the Association.

SECRETARY.—

That is good. You will get 'Hyderabad Farmer' free of charge, then, as we do not charge its price from the members.

RAJ.—

I have seen a copy of the journal and wish to become its regular subscriber.

SECRETARY.—

Good—*(Sends for the Manager)—(Enters the Manager)—*Well, Manager Saheb, will you please present to Mr. RAJ the latest copy of the 'Hyderabad Farmer'—and the pamphlets too.

MANAGER.—

. . . All right Sir—*(Retires).*

SECRETARY.—

But RAJ SAHEB, would you mind telling me your place of domicile.

RAJ.—

Sir, I belong to Ibrahimpet. My father has some cultivable land. He is a land-holder over there.

SECRETARY.—

I see. So you cultivate the land yourself.

RAJ.—

No Sir, my father cultivated the lands while I was in the Agricultural College, Nagpur, wasting away a few years.

SECRETARY.—

Why wasting away? The time spent in a college is never lost. I am glad to hear that you have attended Nagpur College. Did you take a degree from there?

RAJ.—

Yes Sir, I have taken B.Ag.'s, this very year.

SECRETARY.—

I am really very glad to see you, RAJ SAHEB. Our country is in the greatest need of such men who having finished their proper education enter the field and take to agriculture by themselves. You have lands and you should take up agriculture. You will get every feasible help from the Department. Our Association is also at your service.

RAJ.—

(A bit dejected) Yes, but I didn't like to trouble you through relating my domestic affairs to you.

SECRETARY.—

That won't be a trouble, if I may be of any service to you.

RAJ.—

Your kindness encourages me to tell you something. Secretary Sahab! It is in your hands now to make my life a success. After graduation I failed to get a Government post. Because of this my father got angry with me and I am sorry to tell you that he has expelled me from home. I think it is tiresome for you to hear anymore.

SECRETARY.—

No, No. It will never be a trouble to me to hear you, while on the other hand I will do my best to help you out from your difficulties.

RAJ.—

(*With drooping head*) Father's unsympathetic attitude on one side and Kurmaiyya's untiring efforts on the other, will, I fear, separate me from my dear.

SECRETARY.—

'Mother' (*Suggested the Secretary*).

RAJ.—

Oh, No, from my dear BABI—my sweet-heart (Retorted RAJ).

SECRETARY.—

Oh, I am sorry to tell you Raj Saheb, our Association can hardly help you in this.

[*The Manager brings in to RAJ a receipt, a copy of the rules and regulations and a copy of the 'Hyderabad Farmer'—RAJ as if awakened from his deep meditation receives the papers and pays the price.*]

RAJ.—

Excuse me Sir, for having been so very uninteresting to you.

SECRETARY.—

No. RAJ SAHEB, don't think like that—so you will take to agriculture now, I am sure.

RAJ.—

Yes Sir, the thing is that I have received fifteen acres of land from my father, and through it I have to do everything.

SECRETARY.—

So you have fifteen acres of land that you wish to cultivate through the guidance of the Department of Agriculture.

RAJ.—

Yes Sir, but tell me please what procedure should I adopt?

SECRETARY.—

See the Deputy Director at Himayatsagar Farm with a letter I will give you now. I am sure he will help you in every possible way. He may give you seed, etc., in advance and if necessary he may also make a demonstration plot on your fields. In this way cultivation will be undertaken by the Government and the standing crop will be handed over to you.

RAJ.—

(*Wondering at the offer*) But what does the Government gain through spending so much money on others' fields.

SECRETARY.—

I am glad that you asked me this question. I shall most gladly clear your doubt. Many people object to it, thinking that the Government gains nothing in return for such investments. But the truth is that 'gain' does not only mean that if one spends four rupees, he should necessarily get something more as a direct return while gain can be had through many other ways as well. It is needless to tell you that the main object of every government is the prosperity and well-being of the subjects. Now, much is gained if Government expenditures do nothing but are only a source of benefit to the subjects—Moreover, suppose the Government spend thousands of rupees in distributing among the farmers a certain seed of sugarcane, which brings out four times the ordinary yield, and consequently the farmer will get four times his ordinary income. Now do you think that the Government's expenses on the above mentioned sugarcane seed brought no gain. It certainly did. This gain will now go on multiplying year after year. In short the primary investments of the Government will result in a better production and advanced commerce, while all these will help the economic uplift of the people, and well-fed population is always the aim of the Government, while this may also be a better source of income.

RAJ.—

I am really sorry for not to have thought out the point myself. Whatever you said just now is a fact. Now, with all my lands, I am ready to follow the instructions of the Department of Agriculture and if I am to get something through this help, I shall for life be indebted to you. But can I get any other support also from the Department.

SECRETARY.—

Support! My dear Sir, to help and support the cultivators is the only object of the department. You can get every sort of advice concerning agriculture. How disappointing it is to see that such a large department has been established for the well being of the people and they do not make use of it. If there is infection in the field we have a special officer to redress the calamity. For the analysis of soil we have a chemist. For every sort of advice as regards horticulture, we have a qualified Horticulturist, with a separate department under him. For the advancement of poultry breeding we have a Poultry Breeding Farm. There is also a Rural Development Centre at Patancheru, which is doing very good work. We may not attach any importance to it, but all who have even once paid a visit to the place, even foreign specialists are struck with wonder to see the present activities. The Rural Centre at Patancheru is one of the best centres in India. I would like you to go there and consult the officers as regards poultry-breeding and horticulture as well. They will give you good advice. You had better start poultry-breeding and horticulture also at your place. This side business is less expensive and more

RAJ.—

I will try my best. But would you mind giving me the letter you promised.

SECRETARY.—

I will just give it to you. (*The Secretary writes a letter and hands it over to RAJ*). This is the letter, take it to the Deputy Director. The best thing would be to follow every word of his instructions. You are a graduate in agriculture, but I hope you will excuse me if I tell you that in agriculture it is experience that counts more than mere education, while in our modern education, we may gain a lot of knowledge, but how to apply it, we hardly know. That is why it is necessary to follow an experienced man. By the advice and instructions that we offer, we sincerely mean the advancement of agriculture and consequently your betterment. But very few people realise it.

RAJ.—

I have realised it full well.—Thanks very much for kindness and the valuable informations that you have furnished me with. I hope the Farming Association will be of much greater use to me in my future endeavours. Now let me take your leave.

[*Both standing—shake hands—while secretary says :*]

SECRETARY.—

As a member of the Association you will receive a free pass for the Horticultural and Poultry Show that is held every year in Hyderabad.

RAJ.—

That's so good. I will surely attend it. Thanks.

[*Final shake-hand and Raj retires.*]

ACT III.SCENE I.]

[GOVERNMENT FARM.]

[The Deputy Director is standing beside a field at Himayatsagar Main Farm. RAJ approaches him—hands over the letter from the Secretary, Farming Association. The Deputy Director goes through it and turns to RAJ.]

DEPUTY DIRECTOR.—

You are a graduate in Agriculture and wish to take up cultivation. I am very glad to learn that. You will get every possible help from us. How much land is at your disposal at present? Where is it—in what village?

RAJ.—

I have fifteen acres of land in Ibrahimpet near Banswara. I have also a pair of cattle and a country plough.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR.—

Fifteen acres—a pair of cattle and a plough. Anything more?

RAJ.—

Nothing more Sir.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR.—

(After a pause) Is it all dry soil or is there some of wet soil also?

RAJ.—

It is all wet soil, just below the tank-bund.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR.—

I see. I'll come to Ibrahimpet, the day after tomorrow. Wait for me there—After inspecting the fields I will tell you what can be done for you.

[RAJ salutes and is about to retire.]

But listen—when you have come over here, why not take a round of the Farm. I hope it will interest you.

RAJ.—

All right, Sir.

[Both go away.]

SCENE 2.]

[A VILLAGE SCENE.

[A village scene—RAJ waiting for the Deputy Director's arrival beside the main road...The Deputy Director arrives—RAJ salutes—]

DEPUTY DIRECTOR.—

(Returning the salute) How far is your field from this place?

RAJ.—

Yonder Sir—from the road border to the tank bund.
[The Deputy Director inspects the fields followed by RAJ and comes back to the main road.]

DEPUTY DIRECTOR.—

Well RAJ SAHEB we can help you a lot; provided you promise to follow our instructions fully and put aside the idea of being a Bachelor of Agriculture, for I am sure through any interference from you things may go wrong and you will have to suffer.

RAJ.—

I promise you Sir, to follow your instructions almost blindly.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR.—

That is good. But the difficulty is that you do not even have a complete set of material with you. Anyhow, we shall lend you a few quite indispensable implements for trial for the season; later on when you will begin to gain from the crops you may by and by purchase them for yourself. Seed and manure you will get on Takavi. Demonstration plots will be set here that will serve as a model for you and for your co-villagers. But do cultivate sugar-cane No. 213, and Rice No. 504. I will send the Inspector round to you. He will tell you the rest and will arrange for everything necessary. But let me tell you once more to follow his advice fully. Bear in mind that any advice given to you shall only be with a purpose to benefit you and your countrymen. I will also supervise the work from time to time.

[The Deputy Director departs—RAJ having accompanied him a few steps returns, well pleased; and in his overjoy acts like merry children. BABI enters with a melancholy face; but RAJ does not feel her emotions and continues his merry-making.]

RAJ.—

BABI—BABI—Troublesome days is a thing of the past now.

BABI:—

(With a forced smile) Thank God RAJ.

RAJ.—

The Deputy Director has just gone, having promised to assist me in my endeavours. He has promised to help me in various ways and manage for all that, I could scarcely have afforded.

[*BABI tries to join RAJ in his happiness but RAJ is too cheerful and she is found out.*]

RAJ.—

Why, BABI, we shall have wonderful crops now. I shall soon become a rich man and father and Mama shall be reconciled to me and then you—(*After a keen look at BABI*) What? Tears! These tears in your eyes—What do they mean? These idle tears?

BABI.—

Nothing RAJ.

RAJ.—

There is something. Tell me what is it! Anybody vexed you—any bad news?

BABI.—

No. Nobody told me anything.

RAJ.—

Then why these tears? Are you not glad that the wearisome days are sinking fast?

BABI.—

Can you imagine that I will ever fail to participate in your happiness?

RAJ.—

Then why do you rob me of my cheerfulness by pulling a long face at this moment.

BABI.—

(*More tears roll down*) Because they are busy planning to rob me of you.

RAJ.—

(*Silence and a sigh*) Caught the point. I know it BABI, but rest assured, my dear, they will never succeed in their intrigues against us.

BABI.—

(*Coaxingly*) Why! father has already promised to give his final sanction next month as regards my betrothal with Durga.

RAJ.—

I will settle matters with Durga ere next month.

BABI.—

No RAJ—do not do any such thing that.....

RAJ.—

Oh! Fortitude, regard, friendship and benevolence, these are the things that have been up to now responsible for the ruin of my career. They should give way and shall have no place in my life now. Father, grandfather, maternal grandfather, uncle, maternal uncle,—the dead and the living—these were and are, after all, men like ourselves. What does this mean then, that in every case, if our ideas do not agree with those of theirs, the verdict of guilty be pronounced on us alone. Could they never be wrong. Is it only the younger who is always to surrender? I will break off these fetters now.

BABI.—

No RAJ, don't utter such words.

RAJ.—

I never uttered them but now. I had my tongue sealed—bore every nonsense—did not go against a single tradition—though I knew how disastrous their existence has proved to be; and it was owing to this that I had ever been treated so abhorringly as if I were an outcast. Indeed, I was a foe to be feared of and Durga a friend to be embraced.

BABI.—

Keep quiet RAJ. See father is coming.

[BABI retires—Subba enters—RAJ resumes ploughing.]

SUBBA.—

Is it true RAJ—I hear the Deputy Director had come to inspect your fields? Why are you bent upon ruining yourself? I tell you for your own well-being.

RAJ.—

But Mama, when you and father have agreed to get rid of me at the cost of fifteen acres, why not leave me to look after myself. I know what is good and what is bad for me, more than anybody else.

SUBBA.—

Well, RAJ even when you were turned out of the house, as you say, you didn't speak like this. Is a maternal uncle to be treated in this way? Does this your demeanour become a nephew?

RAJ.—

But this, perhaps, becomes a maternal uncle to replace a stranger and culprit for a nephew?

[Enter Kishtaiyya and Mother of RAJ.]

KISHTAIYYA.—

What is it Subba?

SUBBA.—

Nothing Kishtaiyya—I simply warned him not to rely upon the Agricultural Officers, and he began to take me to task for having taken a strange culprit for a nephew. I don't know who that culprit is that I have taken for a nephew.

MOTHER.—

RAJ did you speak any harsh words to Mama?

RAJ.— " "

Do you not know mother? Did you not hear what was decided this morning? Can this ever be?

MOTHER.—

(*After a pause*) I see. I understand it now. All right. Leave the place for a moment, you may come after a while.

[*RAJ departs.*]

KISHTAIYYA.—

What was he grumbling about?

MOTHER.—

Nothing else but . . . You see BABI has been his play-mate from the very childhood, and he has always heard me planning his marriage with BABI, and now he has been told that you have promised Durga for BABI'S hand. This is what troubles him so.

SUBBA.—

I havn't given word as yet.

[*RAJ enters abruptly and addresses his mother.*]

RAJ.—

I have come to tell you that the Deputy Director of Agriculture has inspected the lands. He has promised to furnish me with the necessities of agriculture, some free and some on Takavi. He has also given me word to help me in the management—The rest I leave for you to consider.

[*RAJ retires*]

KISHTAIYYA.—

What did he say? The Deputy Director had come? What for?

MOTHER.—

Well—he had applied to the Department of Agriculture and had requested for Government's help. His application has been granted and the Deputy Director has promised to furnish him with every possible help. RAJ is much grieved to hear that BABI will be married to Durga; and really how awkward it is that he being so near a kin, BABI should be married to a stranger.

KISHTAIYYA.—

RAJ didn't tell me of the application.

MOTHER.—

Why should he? He well knew that you will be annoyed at the idea.

KISHTAIYYA.—

But, I suspect if the Government are generous enough to grant such aids for nothing. There must be something at the bottom.

MOTHER.—

But don't you see how they have prepared Durga's fields. The Department supplied him with seeds, entirely free of charge, the officers supervised the ploughing from time to time. They did the sowing and when the crop was ready, it was handed over to Durga, without any obligation or so. I had asked Durga, what could be the Government interest in it. He told me that the Government wanted to make the farmer richer, wealthier and more happy. So whenever any better sort of seed is discovered it is in this way propagated that its yield is exhibited to the farmers through such demonstration plots and when the farmers there adopt using the same seed, Government's aim is gained.

KISHTAIYYA.—

But I think the Government have to sustain a great loss through the device.

MOTHER.—

This I don't know, but Durga told me that the Government lost little, as, well-to-do subjects meant a wealthy Government. Anyhow, what am I to do with all that? Just tell me what do you think of BABI's betrothal.

SUBBA.—

Well I am under a great suspense. Durga is troubling me on one side and you insist for RAJ on the other. But most of all I think of Kurmaiyya, the landlord—he is a wealthy man—having more than 200 acres of land, dozens of cattle and a score of servants to attend.... More than once has he urged me for a reply. You see, my only consideration is the happiness and comfort of BABI; and as Kurmaiyya's wife, I am sure, she will be in the possession of an immense wealth and all that. That is why I intend to accept his offer.

MOTHER.—

Then you refuse RAJ?

KISHTAIYYA.—

Let RAJ manage for his own bread first.

MOTHER.—

He will soon be able to do that. You have left him indeed, but he can well do for himself. In my opinion give him one fair chance to do something ere you pronounce a verdict of sheer incapability on him.

SUBBA.—

Then tell me what am I to do. As for RAJ we have to wait, but none can say how long, as for Kurmaiyya there is no question to wait, he has wealth that none can fathom.

MOTHER.— * *

What? Do you think RAJWA will never be well-to-do.

SUBBA.—

May be, but what am I to say to Kurmaiyya then.

MOTHER.—

The same Kurmaiyya again! Do you really worship him, only because of a little wealth. You raise him even above the level of human beings. If at all you want a comparison, give a chance to RAJ as well; if he fails to beat others, then you are at liberty to do what you like.

SUBBA.—

Yes, this is quite just. Let RAJ cultivate one plot and Kurmaiyya the other. To one whose field and crops will be better, shall BABI be married.

KISHTAIYYA.—

Yes, this is the best solution—go and tell your son. Let us see what the Department of Agriculture can do.

SCENE 3.]

[KURMAIYYA'S HOUSE.]

[Kurmaiyya—with a few of his companions is drinking Sendhi in his house—All are badly drunk.]

KURMAIYYA.—

What a fool he is—that RAJ. He attempts a tie with me—idiot. What is he when compared to me? I can purchase his house, his lands, his cattle and his whole property if I like. Is that not so Balaiyya?

BALAIYYA.—

Oh yes, my lord. You have wealth enough to purchase his body, his life, even his father, if you like.

KURMAIYYA.—

(Twisting his moustaches) Of course. His fields can never yield more than those of mine. Who else can spend the amount of money that I have invested, have ploughed the field ten times before sowing. Who but I could enrich 20 acres of land with 200 cart-loads of manure, not a joke: I have emptied the whole well in watering the field—and this being the recognised truth that as you sow so shall you reap. Will not my field be unsurpassed in crops and yield? Who dare contend with me? My field will decidedly be the better one.

JAGAIYYA.—

My lord! Who dare deny it?

KURMAIYYA.—

Just think of that lad—he is relying entirely upon the support from the Agricultural Department. He will do as they will bid him. *(Laughs)* He will surely go to ruin. Well Jagaiyya—do not be so sparing—fill the cup—you are too frugal today—a cup more. Let us drink today—yes—come up one more cup.....

JAGAIYYA.—

Just think my lord—our forefathers have always been cultivating the land—sometimes the yield was good and they gained, sometimes the yield was bad and they had to lose. But they never lost their creed. Now these new upstarts object to and defy our old methods, as if our forefathers were mere dupes to maintain the ancestral traditions.

KURMAIYYA.—

Oh, you mean—that RAJ—well he is a mere cynic. Mad after the officers. Just think if things like the Government, the Main Farm, the Agricultural Department if even combined together, can ever make a man wealthy. Is it ever possible?

BALAIYYA.—

And my lord—did you hear—RAJ has started poultry-breeding as well. He was telling me the other day that he would send the birds in the exhibition. He has bought eggs from Pattancheru, he told me, I believe—and has brought out chickens. Just imagine how can a foreign breed prosper in a village like ours.

JAGAIYYA.—

Oh, should I tell you? They will all perish one day.

BALAIYYA.—

What an ideal idiot he is, that RAJ—he was telling me the other day that the white hens with pale yellow legs give 200 eggs each, a year.

KURMAIYYA.—

Oh! He is a perfect liar. 200 eggs a year! What a lie! (*laughs*) I think some officer has told him so. What a set of liars these officers are, and how foolish are the people who believe in them!

But how strong is the Sendhi today—it is really inspiring—you didn't have Balaiyya? Why? have it! have it!—see the white hen with yellow legs had tasted it and began to lay 200 eggs a year! Yes have a cup more, and one more to me.

[*Wild drinking—in rapid succession*]

JAGAIYYA.—

And my lord do you remember that Munshijee's grape garden there.

KURMAIYYA.—

Yes, Yes. I well know it.

JAGAIYYA.—

And it is a haunted place!

KURMAIYYA.—

Yes. Yes. It is. I know that. It never gave any fruit. Indeed no seed can germinate in that garden. The land has lost every value; as one who brings down the old trees is sure to perish while one who retains it, as it is, gains nothing at all

JAGAIYYA.—

And listen, my lord, RAJ has taken that garden on contract.

KURMAIYYA.—

Has he really gone mad? Why did he take it on contract?

BALAIYYA.—

I am sure some of these officers have fooled him. Such acts shall surely lead him to ruin.

JAGAIYYA.—

Yes. Yes. Among these officers there is one, called the Horticulturist; he has done all that my lord. Since he has taken up the charge of his office, he has made it a point to condemn every garden that he comes across. He is always troubling the garden owners with his advice and instructions regarding all the details of the gardening—i.e., what to sow and what not, how and what to take off and all that. Poor Munshijee was fed up with his garden—he found an agreeable fool in RAJWA. He induced him to that contract. RAJ at once approached the Agricultural authorities and brought some Inspector with him, on whose backing he at once agreed to the contract for Rs. 500.

KURMAIYYA.—

And what will he do now? Such a great loss will deprive him of all his property, even of his life, surely he cannot make amends with a loss of Rs. 500.

BALAIYYA.—

It is a wonder, how will he improve the garden. Generally it did not return three rupees. What a fool RAJ is to undertake a contract of Rs. 500!

JAGAIYYA.—

I had asked him—he told me that the “Horticulturist had said to him that he would get a yield to the value of more than a thousand rupees out of the garden.”

KURMAIYYA.—

More than a thousand rupees! (*Laughs and Laughs*) Does he expect gold from the grape grooves?

BALAIYYA.—

He is a fool, my lord. The officer told him and he believed it.

JAGAIYYA.—

And he was telling me my lord, that first he would plough the land, then would apply manure and some chemical that would redress the plant disease, that has caught hold of the trees owing to negligence.

KURMAIYYA.—

Will he rejuvenate the trees then? (*Laughs*).

JAGAIYYA.—

It seems so my lord (*Laughs*). He also mentioned the name of the chemical—it was something like ‘Bordeaux Mixture.’ He thus expected to get abundance of grapes from vineyards and would cultivate vegetables on the vacant plots.

KURMAIYYA.—

Poor man! He is thus sure to complete his ruin. He is my BABU’S brother after all; be he a cousin or a real one, I really regret at his follies.

BALAIYYA.—

Moreover, my lord, one man can do one work at a time; and he has undertaken to do so many at the same time. I am afraid he will bring none to completion, and will have to face a horrible failure.

JAGAIYYA.—

RAJ was telling me the other day that since the exhibitions are being carried on in the Public Garden, men have become very enthusiastic to grow various sorts of flowers, fruits, plants and vegetables, etc., and since the appointment of the Government Horticulturist, the desire of gardening is growing day by day.

KURMAIYYA.—

Oh, he is a perfect liar!—or he was most probably drunk then—what a fool you are to believe a drunkard?

JAGAIYYA.—

And my lord, he has started poultry-breeding as well. The Superintendent of the Poultry Breeding Farm at Pattancheru has made him to breed all sorts of birds, *i.e.*, red, yellow, black, white, slender and fat. But my lord, their eggs are comparatively far bigger than those of our country fowls and are sold at a double price.

KURMAIYYA.—

But these are all sure signs of his ultimate disaster. Watch for the time; when my field will be compared with that of RAJ, everything will come into limelight and you will see the real value of Governmental help and aid. When we have profusely spent money and labour on the field, it is useless to say how flourishing the field would be. Mine, I tell you, shall decidedly be the best.

BALAIYYA.—

Quite so, my lord; whoever dare confront you is sure to ruin himself as one who gazes the sun is sure to lose eyesight.

JAGAIYYA.—

Durga has also contrived to breed a few birds, my lord.

KURMAIYYA.—

Which Durga? I see, that Venkat's son—Oh, he is also a perfect fool; and very headstrong as well. Having had one or two rich crops he has begun to underrate all others' fields and condemns all our old manners and methods of cultivation.

BALAIYYA.—

And did you not hear my lord, on the recommendation of the Superintendent, Government Farm, he has brought in an engine.

KURMAIYYA.—

An engine! What for? Does he intend to start a Railway? What a fool!

BALAIYYA.—

My lord, through that he intends to pull water from the Baoli, carry on thrashing and cane crushing.

KURMAIYYA.—

—and finally he will sit upon it and proceed to the Lunatic Asylum, I suppose.

[All laugh quite desperately]

JAGAIYYA.—

And who is to drive the engine Balaiyya?

BALAIYYA.—

He has employed a man trained by the Superintendent. He is trained to drive the engine as well as to repair it if anything is wrong with it.

KURMAIYYA.—

How is that?

BALAIYYA.—

Oh, my lord, they have a regular institution for that, having several classes of students, where men are taught quite free of charge, how to handle the machinery. They only take Rs. 10 on admission and when the training is over, the sum is refunded.

KURMAIYYA.—

What fools they are! When it is to be returned why do they charge then?

BALAIYYA.—

My lord it is kept as a security, from which they realize the price when anybody has deliberately damaged a machine.

KURMAIYYA.—

No. Balaiyya. You do not know. I have told you they are mere fools to give back the money once charged.

At least I would never do that, but spend it all for Sendhi—
(*Stammering*) But we have to go to the fields. Wait, I
shall be back in a minute (*Singing*).

We are for Sendhi sipping.

Let angels do worshipping.

JAGAIYYA.—

(*With a wink*) Quite saturated!

BALAIYYA.—

(*Laughing in response*). Let us take to smoking till
he comes back.

SCENE 4.]

[IN THE FIELD; RAJ WITH BABI.]

[A year after—RAJ is seen coming to the fields with BABI]

BABI.—

So what is it that the Deputy Director shall particularly see today RAJ?

RAJ.—

He is coming to see the condition of my fields. But BABI, it is today that mine as well as your destiny is to be decided.

BABI.—

Destiny to be decided!

RAJ.—

Not only destiny, but also the question of 'life and death' and 'death-in-life' is to be decided today.

BABI.—

You speak philosophy RAJ—like a superannuated philosopher.

RAJ.—

Had I been so, hardly would I feel that passion called 'Love,' and there was no question of 'to be or not to be.'

BABI.—

No, RAJ, but tell me, what is going to happen today.

RAJ.—

Let me tell you BABI, Durga has four acres of sugarcane, while I have only one acre of it. Moreover, most of his canes are much taller than those of my fields.

BABI.—

May be. But why are you so anxious? I see. Do you think I like only such who may have four acres of sugarcane?

RAJ.—

You may not, but your father does.

BABI.—

You hit upon my father—why not say that your mama does.

RAJ.—

Indeed. BABI, it is such witty remarks of yours which win the hearts.

BABI.—

(Shyly) Look to your own business; why bother yourself with others' affairs?

RAJ.—

Yes, I do not but look to my own business—. Durga has much improved within a year. He has a good material for horticulture, and a good many fowls as well—beside his agriculture.

BABI.—

Then! What of all that?

RAJ.—

Well, Durga could do all that in not less than three years, and I had only one year within which I had to contend with a man like Kurmaiyya. He is wealthy enough even to purchase you, BABI.

BABI.—

What are you talking RAJ?

RAJ.—

Yes, BABI. His success is sure. He will win you. You will be his and he yours.

BABI.—

(Meditates a while—then laughs—as if to console

RAJ). Are you afraid to compete? I don't want to speak to such a coward.

* RAJ.—

(With a sneer) And who cares for it *(turning to go)* you better speak to Kurmaiyya—He is coming.

[RAJ leaves the place—BABI turns aside and finds Kurmaiyya approaching—She hastens to catch hold of RAJ and follows him. Kurmaiyya is enraged.]

KURMAIYYA.—

You—where are you going? *(RAJ and BABI stop and look back at Kurmaiyya)* RAJ! you have no right to keep company with BABI to divert her from me. Be in your senses, otherwise.....

RAJ.—

Otherwise—

KURMAIYYA.—

Otherwise putting aside every regard of friendship I shall publicly beat you with shoes—.

RAJ.—

And this is the very regard! Shame for you fool!

KURMAIYYA.—

I tell you to leave BABI'S hand at once.

RAJ.—

Hush *(taking Babi's hand in his arm more tightly).*

KURMAIYYA.—

Leave it I say.

[*RAJ mocks him and turns back to go away with BABI. Kurmaiyya leaps to catch him. Durga interferes and stops Kurmaiyya.*]

DURGA.—

Wait. Wait. Kurmaiyya, what is it?

KURMAIYYA.—

Leave me, I will suck his blood.

DURGA.—

But BABI is not mixed up in his blood—you won't find her in it. It is all a question of an hour or two. The Deputy Director will be coming soon to decide your fate.

KURMAIYYA.—

But Durga, it is no satisfaction to me. I am sure his decision shall go against me. In spite of having spent lots of money, RAJ'S fields are more flourishing. He has closely adhered to the instructions of the Superintendent Pattancheru Rural Uplift Centre—His house is clean and hygienic. He has bred up a considerable set of poultry. His birds have grown so well that they appear double their age. He has a garden of his own. The Horticulturist in his recent tour, showed his great satisfaction and also the way to more improvement. Quite recently he had sold vegetables alone for a hundred rupees. By the end of this year he is sure to get about two thousand rupees from his fields. Not a negligible sum indeed! And all this through strictly adhering to the advice and instructions of the Department of Agriculture, and the same departmental authorities are to judge. They will certainly favour RAJ.

DURGA.—

But do not think that Agricultural authorities are unjust or partial. I am sure the Deputy Director will decide quite impartially. Don't suspect such nonsense. Come to the fields. The Deputy Director is expected every moment.

[*Both repair to fields*]

SCENE 5.]

[RAJ'S FIELD.]

[The Deputy Director arrives, accompanied by a few other villagers, i.e., the village Patel, the Deshmukh, Kishtaiyya, Subba, RAJ, Raj's mother, Durga and Kurmaiyya.]

DEPUTY DIRECTOR.—

Well Kishtaiyya, how fares it with you?

KISHTAIYYA.—

Quite well, Sir, thank you.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR.—

Are you still hostile towards the Department of Agriculture?

KISHTAIYYA.—

No, Sir, How can I dare be hostile to the Government authorities?

DEPUTY DIRECTOR.—

But you have been quarrelling with your son only because he sought for our help.

KISHTAIYYA.—

Sir, He is my only son, well educated and more efficient than even myself. How can I quarrel with him?

DEPUTY DIRECTOR.—

Then you are reconciled to him, that is very good.

RAJ'S MOTHER.—

Sir, since RAJ'S fields are flourishing all are pleased with him. He owes much to you, my lord. Government made his fields yield gold.

SUBBA.—

All the prosperity of Durga is also based merely on the support from the Government, through the Department of Agriculture.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR.—

Yes, but why say of Durga or Raj only? Whosoever is prepared to follow our advice and instructions, shall have full support from us.

SUBBA.—

Now my lord, you have seen both the fields of RAJ as well as that of Durga. Which one of the two you think to be better—whose work is more creditable?

DEPUTY DIRECTOR.—

Both are very good. Durga's rice (*Paddy*) has ripened well. RAJ'S is also flourishing.

RAJ.—

(*In BABI'S ear*) BABI, the Deputy Director's two words shall decide our fate on the field to-day.

BABI.—

(*With passionate looks*) RAJ!

DEPUTY DIRECTOR.—

Durga is well up in cultivation by this time. An experienced cultivator, he can teach others now.

DURGA.—

All this is owing to you, my lord.

RAJ'S MOTHER.—

But whose work is more creditable of the two, Sir?

DURGA.—

Whosoever it be, but RAJ is a friend of mine. I will give every credit to him. He deserves it. He has done all that within such a short time.

RAJ.—

(*Slowly*) Thank you. But in which corner had you put that friendship when you were ready to snatch away my BABI from me.

DURGA.—

Well RAJ, I was never your rival. I had made an attempt no doubt, but from the moment I came to know of your notions, I consider her to be no other but a sister.

RAJ.—

(*Puts his hand on Durga's shoulder and shakes him merrily*) Good, and I got a brother-in-law gratis.

SUBBA.—

Durga and RAJ have made considerable progress within a very short time.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR.—

Indeed, Durga is first in his Taluka and RAJ in his village.

RAJ'S MOTHER.—

But which one of the two stands first?

DEPUTY DIRECTOR.—

But why such a keen comparison between the two? Both stand first in their separate spheres.

DURGA.—

Sir, the thing is that a very critically important and interesting question is to be solved at your decision. Leave aside the comparison between me and RAJ, but you have just now seen Kurmaiyya's field, and that of RAJ is before your eyes. Which of the two you think is better?

DEPUTY DIRECTOR.—

How can there be a comparison between Kurmaiyya and RAJ?

DURGA.—

Because Kishtaiyya and Subba have declared that he whose crops this year shall be declared as the best by the Deputy Director, shall get BABI in his marriage.

SUBBA.—

And whoever marries BABI shall get my 100 acres of land as well.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR.—

(*With a smile*) A very good bet indeed? This seems to be an agricultural marriage rather than a family marriage. But I would better like to reserve my vote.

RAJ'S MOTHER.—

No, my lord. Be pleased to decide it.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR.—

This is a difficult task altogether. Well, this is a matter of rivalry—why should I interfere? You may best decide yourselves. My congratulations shall go to whoever wins her. But it should rather be decided by all of you. I think Durga is experienced enough to judge such things. His decision will be quite right.

KURMAIYYA.—

Sir, Durga is the friend of RAJ. He will favour him.

PATEL.—

How can he be partial to RAJ, when there are other eyes also to see the fact?

SUBBA.—

Then let patel be the punch, and all of us decide.

DURGA.—

That would be the best process.

PATEL.—

First of all we would like to hear from Deshmukh.

DESHMUKH.—

Well, Kurmaiyya is a co-villager of mine and I know RAJ also. I cannot be partial to anyone but, as a matter of fact, there is a vast difference between the two fields under question. Am I right Durga?

DURGA.—

Yes, Deshmukh. You are right. I have seen both the fields. RAJ has answered to the appropriate needs, while Kurmaiyya has spent lots of money in the preparations, but the truth is that it is the crops that brings money in and not the money that makes the crops grow. In my opinion the field of RAJ.....

ALL AT THE SAME TIME.—

Is better—

PATEL.—

RAJ'S field is far better than that of Kurmaiyya.

[All began to talk together. Kurmaiyya is mortified. But it is impossible to fathom the depth of the happiness of RAJ and BABI. Both merrily join hands, but soon a flush comes over BABI'S face and she with a smile playing on her lips steals away from the gathering towards her house, as if triumphant but overcome with delight.]

RAJ mocks at Kurmaiyya once more, who is mortified and enraged, but finds himself utterly helpless.

Subba, Kishtaiyya and Raj's mother (the lady dictator) chatter and laugh loudly—

The Deputy Director is not left unaffected. He is rejoiced to see the rejoicings and gives way to a smile.

Thus he leaves the place with his subordinates. RAJ follows him till the road to say him farewell.]

THE END

GLOSSARY

ASEELABAD	..	. Coined name for a place, derived from "Aseel" which means Game-cock.
BAGHAT	..	.. A District in Hyderabad State.
BAOLI	..	.. Well.
BOTO MIXTURE	..	.. Bordeaux mixture.
DESHMUKH	'..	.. Village headman.
GULABNAGAR	..	.. Coined name for a place, derived from "Gulab" which means Rose.
JAGIRDAR	..	.. Landlord.
KARAMKALLAPALLI	..	.. Coined name for a place, derived from "Karamkalla" which means Cabbage.
LAT SAHEB	..	.. Lieutenant Governor.
MAMA	..	.. Uncle.
MULKI	..	.. Resident of the Hyderabad State.
PANCH	..	.. Arbitrator.
PANDITJI	..	.. Hindu priest.
PATEL	..	.. Revenue collecting official in village.
PATWARI	..	.. Revenue record official in village.
PUBLIC GARDENS	..	.. The Municipal garden in Hyderabad, which also has a Zoological section.
SAHEB	..	.. Officer.
SAHEB BAHADUR	..	.. European officer.
SAPOTA	..	.. Sapodilla.
SENDHI	..	.. Intoxicating liquor of the palm-tree.
TACAVI	..	.. Loan granted by Government to farmers.
TALUKA	..	.. Tahsil.
TALUKDAR	..	.. District Revenue Collector.

